

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 ICA-11 TRSE-00 XMB-02
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R 311600Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8669

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AID FOR ADMIN GILLIGAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SPOP, NI
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH GLOBAL PROBLEMS:
POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

1. THE FMG IS NOW WELL AWARE OF NIGERIA'S DEFICIT
FOOD PRODUCTION PROBLEM. IT HAS FORMULATED GOALS TO
INCREASE CROP AND LIVESTOCK YIELDS AND IS VERY MUCH
INTERESTED IN OBTAINING US ASSISTANCE FOR THIS PURPOSE.
ONE OF THE SUB-GROUPS OF THE 20 PERSON NIGERIAN DELEGATION
WHICH WENT TO THE US AT THE END OF APRIL FOR A WEEK OF
BILATERAL ECONOMIC TALKS, AS A DIRECT FOLLOW-UP TO
PRESIDENT CARTER'S VISIT HERE, DEALT WITH AGRICULTURAL
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. AS A RESULT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS,
THE USG HAS AGREED TO ASSIST IN NIGERIA'S AGRICULTURAL
DEVELOPMENT BY SENDING AN EIGHT-MAN TEAM HERE TO HELP
IN THE PLANNING OF A VIABLE PROGRAM TO MEET CURRENT AND
FUTURE FOOD REQUIREMENTS. IN ADDITION THE FMG IS
PURSUING A NUMBER OF CONTRACT POSSIBILITIES WITH
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AMERICAN AGRIBUSINESS ENTERPRISES.

2. THE ISSUE OF POPULATION GROWTH, ON THE OTHER
HAND, IS A DELICATE ONE, FOR THERE IS MUCH
SENSITIVITY IN NIGERIA ABOUT ANY OVERT POPULATION
PROGRAMS. AN EXAMPLE OF THE PROBLEM WAS PROVIDED
BY A RECENT NATIONAL TV PROGRAM. THE CHARGE WAS MADE

ON THE PROGRAM THAT "IMPERIALIST COUNTRIES" WISH TO RESTRICT AFRICAN POPULATION GROWTH FOR INTERNATIONAL POLITICO-ECONOMIC ENDS.

3. OUR RESIDUAL USAID PROGRAM IS WORKING THROUGH THE INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH IN FINANCING SIX CLINICS WHERE CHILD AND MATERNAL HEALTH GUIDANCE IS DISPENSED. NO POPULATION CONTROL ACTIVITIES ARE PRACTICED PER SE BY THESE CLINICS, BUT GUIDANCE ON SPACING CHILDREN IS GIVEN. IN ADDITION, OUR EMBASSY MAINTAINS A RUNNING BRIEF ON A VARIETY OF OTHER POPULATION PLANNING ACTIVITIES BY US FOUNDATIONS AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS.

4. FROM TIME TO TIME I HAVE DISCUSSED WITH FMG OFFICIALS THE PROBLEMS OF RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THOSE PROBLEMS TO AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE RESPONSES I HAVE RECEIVED INDICATE THAT THESE OFFICIALS ARE AWARE OF THE PROBLEM BUT THAT THEY DO NOT EXPECT FMG TO ATTACK IT AGGRESSIVELY. THEY GENERALLY HAVE TAKEN THE ATTITUDE THAT THIS IS A PROBLEM WITH WHICH THE FUTURE CIVILIAN REGIME WILL NEED TO GRAPPLE.

5. I WILL CONTINUE IN MY CONTACTS WITH FMG OFFICIALS TO SEEK TO INCREASE THEIR AWARENESS OF THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IMPLICATIONS OF NIGERIA'S HIGH BIRTH RATE. I INTEND TO SEEK AN EARLY MEETING WITH AGRICULTURAL COMMISSIONER MAFENI AFTER MY RETURN FROM SEVERAL WEEKS LEAVE BEGINNING JUNE 1. I WILL HOPE IN THAT MEETING TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL IMPETUS TO THE PROGRAM OF US-NIGERIAN COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF FOOD PRODUCTION. I WILL EXPRESS APPRECIATION FOR THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE FMG'S AGRICULTURAL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE RECENT BILATERAL TALKS AND WILL DISCUSS APPROPRIATE FUTURE STEPS WITH REGARD TO US AGRICULTURAL ASSISTANCE. IN THE COURSE OF THIS MEETING IT SHOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO DISCUSS THE RELATED PROBLEM OF POPULATION GROWTH AND TO INQUIRE WHAT THE FMG'S CURRENT VIEWS ARE ON THIS SUBJECT. I WILL PARTICULARLY SEEK TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER THE FMG PLANS TO INITIATE ANY NEW ACTIONS IN THE FAMILY PLANNING FIELD OR WILL LEAVE THIS SUBJECT TO THE CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT SCHEDULED TO TAKE OFFICE NEXT YEAR.
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